



West Valley View

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Full speed ahead: Goodyear, Avondale agree to I-10 widening agreement

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After weeks of squabbling, three West Valley cities agreed to pony up the cash to get Interstate 10 up to speed.

The Goodyear, Avondale and Litchfield Park city councils held separate special meetings Thursday to approve an intergovernmental agreement for widening I-10 between Loop 101 and Sarival Avenue, four years ahead of schedule.

The IGA divides the interest associated with widening I-10, \$2.7 million, among the three cities.

The state of Arizona will pay the bulk of the estimated \$150 million project, approved by the Maricopa Association of Governments.

The Legislature had previously promised a \$9.7 million reimbursement of the interest cost but left MAG to decide how much of the funding would be appropriated.

Last month, MAG agreed to pay \$7 million for the acceleration, leaving the three cities to fund the remaining \$2.7 million.

The three cities bickered over who had to pay how much of the remaining costs.

About a year ago, the three cities resolved to pay the costs of the project. Avondale and Goodyear were to pay a share based on freeway lane mileage running through their cities, according to Goodyear staff.

Yet, the past month has been plagued with conflicts and disagreements. On Aug. 27, the Goodyear City Council agreed to accept "at least" \$6 million of the legislatively appropriated \$9.7 million for the project.

But the following week, the Avondale and Litchfield Park city councils directed their respective mayors to return to MAG and seek more than \$6 million. They were successful in garnering an additional \$1 million for the project.

Avondale and Litchfield Park argued that they should share the additional \$1 million funding and Goodyear should pick up the change.

Goodyear balked at that idea because it would increase the city's obligation beyond the agreed amount.

After several meetings where elected officials argued over the costs, guest columns in local newspapers and pressure from the community - the cities came up with a new agreement.

The approved IGA holds Goodyear responsible for about \$1.8 million; Avondale \$756,500; and Litchfield Park \$58,000.

"It's still not a bad deal," said Avondale Mayor Marie Lopez Rogers. "When we're all not happy, it's usually good to compromise. We just need to get it done."

The agreement allows the project to begin four years sooner than the Regional Transportation Plan called for.

Lopez Rogers said she is confident the cities can get past the hiccup in their relationship and work together in the future.

"We share borders, we have to," she said. "There's no way around it."

Staff Writer Frank Morris contributed to this article.

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